



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Shona Robison MSP
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Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Last Wednesday (22nd November), the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt MP announced a number of measures to support small businesses. These measures included, but were not limited to, the continuation of alcohol duties at their current rates, the freezing of the small business multiplier (Scottish poundage) and the extension of the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) Scheme providing eligible businesses with a 75% rates relief for a fifth year.

Taken all together, these measures amount to a support package worth over £4.3bn over the next 5 years. The Chamber understands that the Treasury has calculated the value of the subsequent Barnett Consequential funding to Scotland to be worth £545m.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce is one of the biggest Chambers in Scotland, representing over 1,200 member companies, employing a collective 100,000 people in the North-east of Scotland. We hear on a daily basis, as we are sure you do, the difficulties businesses are facing with rising costs. With energy rising once again, and the Chancellor's announcement of a further increase in the National Living Wage, these essential costs are set to escalate further.

To ensure that Scotland is not put at a competitive disadvantage over the rest of the United Kingdom from attracting inward investment, and that hard-pressed businesses, still fighting for survival post-Covid19, are not pushed beyond viability, we would strongly urge you to consider using this funding to replicate the UK measures by freezing the headline business rates poundage and extending the 75% RHL rates relief in the upcoming Scottish Budget.

Extending these measures would ensure that Scottish hospitality (and other) businesses can continue to do what they do best – providing locals and visitors with fantastic experiences, create and retain jobs, and continue to make a significant contribution to the Scottish economy – achieving the Scottish Government New Deal for Business Group's stated aim of using business rates to "better support business growth, investment and competitiveness".

We would be happy to discuss these issues with you in more detail.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ryan Crighton
Director of Policy and Marketing



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